

EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT
ROUTING SLIP

*Memo
Chano*

TO:

	ACTION	INFO	DATE	INITIAL
1 DCI		X		
2 DDCI		X		
3 EXDIR		X		
4 D/ICS				
5 DDI		X		
6 DDA				
7 DDO		X		
8 DDS&T				
9 Chm/NIC				
10 GC				
11 IG				
12 Compt				
13 D/Pers				
14 D/OLL				
15 D/PAO				
16 SA/IA				
17 AO/DCI				
18 C/IPD/OIS				
19 NIO/USSR		X		
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SUSPENSE

Date

Remarks

Executive Secretary

29 Mar 85

Date

3637 (10-81)

STAT

The Director of Central Intelligence

Washington, D. C. 20505

Executive Registry

85-

1369/2

28 March 1985

MEMORANDUM FOR: DDI

FROM: DCI

SUBJECT: Article by Mikhail S. Bernstam

I think you will find the attached
interesting.



William J. Casey

Attachment:
Abovementioned Article

Executive Registry

85- 1369/3

The Director of Central Intelligence

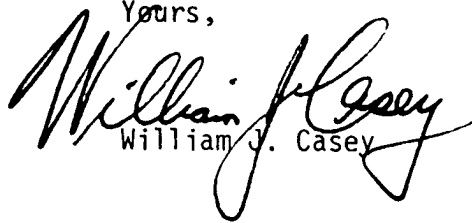
Washington, D.C. 20505

28 March 1985

Dear Mr. Bernstam,

Thanks very much for sending me your most interesting article on Gorbachev. It was very well done and I agree with your assessments.

Yours,


William J. Casey

Mr. Mikhail S. Bernstam
Senior Research Fellow
Hoover Institution
on War, Revolution and Peace
Stanford, California 94305

HOOVER INST'UTION

ON WAR, REVOLUTION AND PEACE

Stanford, California 94305



March 19, 1985

Executive Registry

85- 1369/1

Mr. William Casey
Central Intelligence Agency
Washington, D. C. 20505

Dear Mr. Casey:

Please find enclosed my background article on Mr. Gorbachev. The reason I am sending it is the mentioning in the Time magazine that your file is, in their words, "thin and unhelpful." In fact, all my data on this bastard, like in the case of the overdue late Mr. Andropov in the book published two years ago, is derived from rather handy official Soviet sources.

In case you need more, do not hesitate to contact me at the Hoover Institution where I had an opportunity to have a conversation with you last year. My telephone number here is (415) 323 8152 or (415) 497 0527.

With best personal regards,

Yours sincerely,

Mikhail S. Bernstam
Senior Research Fellow

*Forthcoming in
Peace, Health, Prosperity World Report¹, v. 4, No. 4 (Tokyo, April 1985)*

DETERMINANTS AND VARIABLES OF THE GORBACHEV SUCCESSION

by Mikhail S. Bernstam

Executive Registry

85- 1369

The March 1985 issue of The Soviet Life, the Soviet propaganda magazine for Western consumption, carried a feature article entitled "How to Live up to 100." One of the favorite Soviet themes, to be sure, but General Secretary and President Konstantin U. Chernenko laid in state in the Moscow House of Columns while the magazine was circulating in Western bookstores. And American Vice-President George Bush has secured his place in the Guinness Book of Records as the expert on Soviet funerals: he has buried three Soviet leaders in less than two-and-a-half years.

The new Soviet General Secretary, Mikhail Sergeevich Gorbachev, the obvious beneficiary of Mr. Chernenko's death, gained most from the slow-motion succession. Mr. Chernenko had been ailing for at least two months and Mr. Gorbachev had already presided over the ruling Soviet Politbureau as the acting General Secretary. This allowed Mr. Gorbachev to secure the succession while President Chernenko was still alive. In fact, some of Mr. Gorbachev's economic and political programs, as well as political maneuvers in the power struggle, had already been in full speed several weeks before the formal succession. This is why the formal succession appeared on the surface to be so smooth and non-controversial.

1. The Real Gorbachev Background.

Like most other Soviet leaders at the time of their accession to power, General Secretary Gorbachev is surrounded by myths and wild

misrepresentations in the Western press. Last year he went to England to seek new credits and markets in order to compensate for falling Soviet oil revenues and general hard-currency tightening. The myth was that he wanted to enhance his international stature for the future struggle for succession. To be sure, both his predecessors, Andropov and Chernenko, became Soviet leaders without any record of travel or international stature. The nice looking Mrs. Gorbachev was said in the press to have been sent with him to seduce Western public opinion and even to split the NATO alliance via the public relations blitz. In fact, she went to London for shopping. The lady had a lot of purchasing power, yet she was doomed for years to accept randomly packaged Western goods from the special Kremlin stores while she wanted to make her own selection.

A lot has been made of Mr. Gorbachev's relative youth. He is 54, indeed. Georgi M. Malenkov, Stalin's successor, was 51 when he assumed power in 1953. Less than two years later, still younger than Gorbachev is now, Malenkov was disgraced and demoted, and later expelled from the Central Committee and even from the Party. After that, he was seen staying in lines for bread like the ordinary Russians.

One has to emphasize in the strongest terms possible that age is not, nor has it ever been, an issue in the Soviet succession pattern in general or in the Gorbachev succession in particular. There is no evidence whatsoever that the Soviet leadership is divided directly by generational conflict, of the old versus the young, in the struggle for political power and supremacy. Age, as an objective biological factor, plays its role only on the big scale of the natural generational change throughout the entire bureaucracy, but not in any personal case of the top leadership succession. Gorbachev won the power struggle for the time being not because of his relative youth, but rather due to his appointment as acting General Secretary while Chernenko was still able

to keep the political process under control. The second factor which contributed to Gorbachev's succession was, ironically, the fact that the majority of the older Politbureau members had good reasons to rally around the young Gorbachev against another relatively young contender, Grigory V. Romanov. We shall discuss this matter later in more detail.

All Western comments I saw try to disassociate Mr. Gorbachev from Chernenko and tie him to the party ideologue Mikhail A. Suslov and to Mr. Andropov on the grounds that the first used to work for a few years in the early 1940s in the Gorbachev native district of Stavropol, while the second was born there before World War I. In fact, Andropov left that district in 1932, perhaps before Gorbachev's weaning, and Suslov left it while Gorbachev was still in the junior high. Neither leader had ever returned to the Stavropol district for any political action nor promoted anybody from that region.

Chernenko, on the other hand, had had a long-established connection since the late 1940s with Gorbachev's patron in Stavropol, a certain Fedor D. Kulakov, who was since the mid-1960s one of the Party national Secretaries and in the 1970s a member of the ruling Politbureau in charge of agriculture. When Kulakov died in 1978 at age 60 under mysterious circumstances and Chernenko was just promoted to full membership in the Politbureau, Chernenko brought Gorbachev to Moscow to replace Kulakov. This is when and why Mr. Gorbachev emerged as a figure of the national stature and one of the future contenders for the highest office. I am pleased to recall that in the first issue of PIIP World Report in October 1982, when President Leonid Brezhnev was still alive and Messrs. Andropov and Chernenko were in the waiting for power, I predicted that sooner or later Mr. Gorbachev could become the leader of the Soviet Union. It took two-and-a-half years for that prediction to materialize.

The Gorbachev road to power was, however, much less smoother than his

immediate succession after Mr. Chernenko in March 1985. In the early 1950s, while a law student and the Communist Youth League organiser in Moscow, he evidently sought the type of career Nikita S. Khrushchev and many others achieved in the USSR. This was a direct promotion ladder via one or another of thousands positions in the giant Party apparatus in Moscow. Such an attempt failed and Gorbachev had to return to his native district of Stavropol where, although he was a graduate of the most prestigious Law School in the nation, he could not obtain an important job for about a year.

Gorbachev's stars began to rise in 1956 when Chernenko, whom Gorbachev had not met yet, was brought by Brezhnev and Suslov to Moscow to the core of the Central Committee and helped, in turn, an old boss of his and of Kulakov's, one Ivan K. Lebedev, take charge of the Stavropol district. Mr. Lebedev, who came from Moscow, needed a young ambitious local, but with rather severed ties with the local environment, better yet with some Moscow background, to take over the Communist Youth League apparatus of the city of Stavropol. He picked Gorbachev. In 1960, when Chernenko became chief-of-staff of the President of the Soviet Union, he arranged a big promotion for Mr. Kulakov himself to become the First Secretary of the Party in the district of Stavropol. Kulakov received Mr. Gorbachev as one of his old friend Lebedev's lieutenants, and promoted him to position of First Secretary of the district's Communist Youth League. But in 1962 Mr. Gorbachev suffered a dangerous setback due to Nikita S. Khrushchev's reorganization of the Party apparatus throughout the Soviet Union.

In order to overcome the entrenched corporation of the Party apparatus network, Khrushchev split the Party provincial and local bureaucracies on two parts: industrial and agricultural committees. Those local leaders whom Khrushchev wanted to deprive of real power, received positions in the

agricultural committees, while Khrushchev appointed his new men to have an upper hand in every district and province as leaders of industrial committees. In that reshuffle, Kulakov was demoted to the agricultural committee and Gorbachev lost his high job altogether. The most Kulakov could do for him was to give him a position as a Party organizer in a group of collective and state farms. Next year, however, when Chernenko became the chief-of-staff of the Second Secretary of the Communist Party, Kulakov began to overwhelm the new Khrushchev appointee in Stavropol. In order to do so, Kulakov needed to put his own man in charge for the district Party cadres. With Chernenko's help he achieved that goal. Understandably, the man put in the above-named key position was Mr. Gorbachev.

After Khrushchev's ouster in October 1964, Messrs. Brezhnev and Suslov took over, and Chernenko became their right hand in the Central Committee apparatus. Immediately, Kulakov was brought to Moscow and put in charge of the entire Soviet agriculture. For his part, Kulakov promoted Gorbachev at the local level of the Stavropol district, first as head of the city Party apparatus, then as Second Secretary of the whole district, and finally, in 1970, to Kulakov's own former position, the First Secretary of the Stavropol district Party committee. In 1971 when Kulakov became a member of the ruling Politbureau, Gorbachev was propelled to the full membership of the Central Committee without ever being in the intermediary position of a candidate member of that body.

When, as it was said above, Mr. Kulakov suddenly died in 1978, Mr. Chernenko, who had just become full member of the Politbureau and began his struggle for position of Brezhnev's heir-apparent, needed someone to replace Kulakov in the national Party's Secretariat. Actually, for the long run, Chernenko needed more than that. He needed his right hand, his trusted second-

in-command in the Party apparatus. There could not have been a better choice than his late friend Kulakov's well-tested protege. Thus Mr. Gorbachev came back to Moscow and assumed position as Secretary of the Central Committee for agriculture and Chernenko's main subordinate ally in the top leadership.

This happened to Gorbachev twenty-five years later since he had first tried to make a career in Moscow, but now he was real close to the very top.

2. The Gorbachev Rollercoaster.

In 1979, when Chernenko overshadowed other leaders as Mr. Brezhnev's heir-apparent, Gorbachev became an alternate member of the ruling Politbureau. The man whom Chernenko managed to elbow from the position of Brezhnev's heir-apparent was Andrei P. Kirilenko. The latter had established a vast corporate network of central and local Party leaders, a future corporation of power in the USSR destined to replace the aging old corporation which was cemented during Stalin's time and consisted of people like Suslov, Brezhnev, Andropov, etc. There were many links between the old and the new corporations. Andropov, for example, was an old friend of Kirilenko's since the 1930s. Both Kirilenko and Andropov helped to promote within the network of the new corporation such people as the Leningrad Party boss, Romanov.

While Messrs. Kirilenko and Andropov could rely on the support of both corporations, old and new, Chernenko was virtually on his own and derived his power mostly from Brezhnev's and Suslov's personal protection. This is why Mr. Chernenko needed so badly to have at least a few personal subordinate allies on the top, people like Gorbachev. From the standpoint of Mr. Gorbachev himself, this was his main strength during the process of Chernenko's accession, but it was also his weakness vis-a-vis the cohesive corporate network of the new

generation of cadres, people like Romanov. These are factors which have both helped and plagued Gorbachev's fortune since the late 1970s and which will be crucial in his future fate as General Secretary of the Party.

This cluster of variables should explain both Gorbachev's incredibly steep accession in 1978-1985 and his falls and troubles in 1983-1984. From the Party Secretary in 1978 to an alternate membership in the Politbureau in 1979 to the full membership in the Politbureau in 1980 was an unprecedented rise in the Party's records, unprecedented, that is, with one important exception. Namely, just a few years back the same speed characterized Mr. Chernenko himself. After Mr. Brezhnev's death, when Mr. Andropov became General Secretary and Mr. Chernenko Second Secretary, Gorbachev's power and responsibility expanded in early 1983 from agriculture to the entire Soviet economy, but in the middle of the same year a dangerous competition emerged. President Andropov brought Grigory Romanov from Leningrad to Moscow and made him another Party Secretary in combination with the full membership in the Politbureau.

Thus the Andropov-Romanov bloc was forged against the Chernenko-Gorbachev bloc. Correspondingly, Mr. Gorbachev's future became very uncertain, especially in the view of the past record of other young and the restless Soviet leaders in an analogous situation (the case of Aleksandr N. Shelepin, Mr. Brezhnev's competition in the 1960s and 1970s is the best example: he was gradually demoted and ousted). Fortunately for the Chernenko-Gorbachev bloc, Mr. Andropov fell terminally ill in the fall of 1983 and Mr. Romanov could not do much on his own.

After Andropov's death and Chernenko's accession to ultimate power, Mr. Gorbachev was established as the heir-apparent which did not make both the old and the new incorporated leaders very happy. At that moment, Messrs.

Chernenko and Gorbachev presided over the first, however mild, purge of the Party apparatus. One of Gorbachev's spokesmen called it "a singular action by summary means" against those who became "semi-communists." Of the 157 district party bosses, 34 were fired, that is 22%. Of the 23 heads of departments of the Central Committee, 9 were replaced, that is 39%. In April 1984, a special task force was established, the Bureau of the Central Inspection, in order to fight against what was called the "ossification of the party personnel."

Then Gorbachev suffered another dangerous setback on his road to ultimate power. In October 1984 the Soviets held a major Party convention on agricultural matters for which Gorbachev was in charge among other things. He, however, was apparently absent from the convention. Next month, Chernenko took pains to cancel a regular Plenum of the Central Committee which was supposed to make major changes at the top and, most probably, to oust Gorbachev from power.

The impression of some observers, myself included, was that Gorbachev was finished. He made a remarkable comeback, though, in December. He presided over a Party conference and later made his celebrated trip to England. At this Party conference in December 1984, he pushed his vigorous program of changing social relations in the country.

What he meant became clear from the ideological campaign which began a few weeks ago, when Chernenko was already on his way out and Gorbachev presided over Politbureau as Acting General Secretary. An editorial of the leading Party magazine, Kommunist (No. 3, February 1985), a Gorbachev mouthpiece, warned that the large scale fight begins now against anti-socialist groups and individuals, especially those who sneaked in to the Communist Party. Such violent language was unheard of in the Soviet Union since Stalin's death.

Mr. Gorbachev himself, now at last in the capacity of General Secretary, used the eulogy for Chernenko to send the same message. He warned

that he will fight anti-socialist behavior, "swagger and irresponsibility," and "strengthen the party's cohesion. The theme of the party's endangered unity hints clearly at the continuous and even sharpening factional struggle at the very top.

Mr. Gorbachev's problem is that although Chernenko's gradual departure secured his succession, he is, after Chernenko's death, virtually alone against two vast corporations of other leaders and their subordinates throughout the bureaucracy. What definitely helped the new General Secretary to achieve his position and will still help to hang on to power for some time, is that the old corporation, represented now most prominently by Politbureau members Gromyko, Grishin and Tikhonov, wanted to prevent Grigory Romanov's leap to the highest power. But now Gorbachev finds himself between the hammer and the hard place, that is between the two corporations. He must not touch either of them if he wants to avoid their renewed alliance against him, but he also must do something about both of them, and better do it summarily, in order to prevent them from finding a better candidate for the highest leadership from their own ranks.

The point is not that Mr. Gorbachev does not have what Western press called "a power base." This can be easily established by promoting a few allies to the ruling Politbureau and a few dozens to the Party apparatus. The difficult part is that the entire political infrastructure under him is waiting to jump on him and that he cannot win without a massive, and in all likelihood bloody, wholesale purge akin to that of Stalin. Gorbachev can win, but he may also break his neck.